

# The National Beekeepers' Association of N.Z.

## A PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMME.

The 1935 annual conference of delegates of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand was held at Hamilton in June, and was most successful, being attended by delegates from all parts of the Dominion.

It became evident during the discussions that the political weight of the "National" was insufficient to induce the Government to give the industry the fair consideration to which it was entitled. With a view to correcting this by stimulating the interest of all beekeepers in the work of the "National," and securing their co-operation in all things tending towards progress and prosperity in the industry, I have (as a member of the executive of the "National") written and issued this appeal. The views expressed herein are those I hold personally, and I hope that they may arouse the reader's interest and secure his sympathy and active help for the "National."

The "National" has a splendid record of service, and many of the benefits enjoyed to-day by beekeepers throughout the Dominion are due to the efforts of this organisation.

The depression, however, seriously affected the ability of the beekeeper to support the "National" owing to the depreciation of his income. The local market collapsed in 1932 after the "death" of the New Zealand Co-operative Honey Producers' Association, Ltd. The cutting of prices and panic selling reduced the returns from honey to below the costs of production. The H.P.A. reclamations accentuated the difficult financial position.

The outlook for the future was black indeed until, as the result of prolonged negotiations and much grave consideration, the members of the "National" successfully arranged the organisation

of a new co-operative honey marketing company, New Zealand Honey, Ltd. This company is now an outstanding commercial success.

The operations of New Zealand Honey, Ltd., on the local market steadied sales and raised prices to a payable level for the whole industry in less than one year. Returns to beekeepers improved by 1d per lb and more, and panic selling disappeared. The following advertisements appearing in the "New Zealand Herald" of July 15 amply illustrate this:

**H**ONEY, 6 tons Light Amber; 4½d., 4d. on rail.—P. . . . ., Pirongia.

**H**ONEY, any quantity, 60lb. tins, 5d. per lb. Cash with order.—Box. . . . ., Hamilton.

**H**ONEY, 60lb. tins, Medium Amber, £1 2/6; Light Amber, £1 5/-; freight paid.—F. . . . ., Ohaupo.

Beekeepers are now facing better conditions and their incomes have improved. The future of the industry lies in the hands of the beekeepers themselves, and it is a matter of sound business for them to protect their means (or part means) of livelihood by rallying to the help of any organisation that can give definite results in this direction. The splendid record of the "National" justified such support in the past. The progressive programme outlined herein would promise an even greater measure of effective work in the future. To get the fullest value from the efforts of the "National" a multitude of co-workers, non-members as well as members, is needed in every district in the Dominion. Will you, fellow-beekeeper, make one to help the good work on in your own district? There are able and progressive men in the industry who are willing to give free

and generous service in making the "National" a live, invaluable organisation. But they need your added "push" to make the wheels of progress revolve more quickly and more surely.

We appeal to every beekeeper to act as a local agent of the "National"; firstly, in a Dominion-wide effort to get published in every local paper articles on bees and honey (supplied by us to you). The object is to increase the consumption of honey. Secondly, to send letters (the substance supplied by us) to their Parliamentary representatives (or to speak to them personally if convenient) supporting any request made to the Government for the betterment of the industry. Thirdly, to offer constructive criticism and suggestions to the "National" to ensure sound, practical objectives.

The help of beekeepers on these lines will be of immense value, and their active weight will make success easier of accomplishment. The matter of becoming a member of the "National" may be left until circumstances make it convenient or advisable.

There are many major matters that need immediate attention, and some of these are:

- (1) Inspection for disease (A.F.B.).
- (2) Eradication of disease.
- (3) Destruction of bees and combs in diseased hives, and payment of moderate compensation to the owner.
- (4) More efficient organisation of the field work of the Apiary Division, and the fuller use of the fine staff of apiary instructors for the benefit of all beekeepers, large and small.
- (5) The issue of bulletins (free to all registered beekeepers) containing descriptions of the most up-to-date methods of the manipulation of bees and the production of honey.

I consider that when financial conditions warrant it, the "National" should publish a quarterly journal devoted to beekeeping and issue it free of all charge to every one of our 7000 registered beekeepers. For 2½ years I conducted a small beekeeping journal for the Auckland Central branch and posted it free monthly to 550 beekeepers. The financial members increased from 11 to 68, with splendid meetings. The advertisements paid the total costs of publication and distribution. Illness caused

me to regretfully relinquish the Editorship. Part of the service rendered by a proposed Dominion monthly bee journal should be to reply to the many queries of the smaller beekeepers who often lack the experience to enable them to decide upon a correct method of carrying out some detail in their bee-work.

(6) To establish a modern, well stocked library with all the standard works on every branch of beekeeping and honey production; these books to be loaned free of charge to any member of the "National." As the result of a motion moved by me at last conference, it was decided to adopt this project and funds were voted for the purpose. The educational value of such a library could hardly be over-estimated. In Australia there is the Beulme Memorial Library, in Scotland the Moir Memorial Library, in U.S.A. the Miller Memorial Library, and other countries have similar institutions. We wish to establish the Hopkins Memorial Library to the memory of New Zealand's "Grand Old Man" of beekeeping.

(7) To promote research work into problems of importance to beekeepers. At my request, the 1934 conference set up an Advisory Research Committee, of which I was elected chairman (and secretary). As a result of considerable correspondence and a visit by myself to the Cawthron Institute at Nelson (as their guest) a very comprehensive scheme of research work was outlined. The institute authorities have a fund (bequeathed by the late Isaac Hopkins) which they are using for this work, which promises remarkably valuable and far-reaching results in the elimination of strong, disagreeable flavours, and the removal of dark colours from the lower-grade honeys. Detailed analyses of many New Zealand honeys have been completed, and important facts have been ascertained. The address at last conference by Mr. G. Rigg, Director of Cawthron Institute, was a most interesting and instructive one and the result of the application of science to our problems was well illustrated in some samples of our poorest honeys that were transformed into high-grade products. Other lines of work will be undertaken later. The institute recently appointed to its staff a highly qualified research chemist to specialise in the study of



honey, and beekeeping problems. This should result in the greater progress of the industry.

(8) The "National" is determined to build up a substantial legal defence fund in order to defend any member against claims for damages on account of his bees. The best legal talent will be employed and the case fought through the courts, and any damages awarded will be paid from the fund. One quarter of every member's subscription is now placed to the credit of the fund, and every member is now automatically entitled to the full use of this fund. This insurance is a very valuable service to beekeepers and has already been of great help.

(9) As the result of the putting into practice of the ideas outlined in paragraphs 1 to 8, there will undoubtedly be an increase in the production of honey in the Dominion with a generally higher standard of quality. The need will then arise for an increase in consumption to counterbalance this. It will be easy to cope with the position if interesting, well-planned and convincing propaganda is conducted throughout the Dominion. There are four methods available, and all are good:

(a) By securing the publication in all local newspapers of short, bright news articles on bees and honey. The "National" could prepare these articles, post them to beekeepers all over the Dominion, and the beekeepers would ask the editors of their local papers to publish them (say, one each month).

The enclosed article on the "Value of Honey" I wrote in response to requests for talking points which beekeepers could use in making sales of honey and proving its outstanding value as a food. I enclose a copy with the hope that it will prove useful.

(b) By talks "over the air." These have a most valuable and widespread influence. By weaving into a most entertaining and interesting story of bee life a gentle reference to the delicious food the bees so cleverly prepare, splendid publicity is secured.

(c) By organising a Dominion-wide "Honey Week." This entails a great deal of detail work and requires very efficient, skilful direction. The results

are truly wonderful. "Honey Weeks" are annual features in the main honey-producing countries of the world.

(d) By talks and demonstrations to women's organisations. These are probably the most valuable of all, but they need considerable effort and knowledge, and require the help of someone able to devote a large portion of his time to the work. There are also demonstrations at shows, etc. The opportunities are almost limitless.

(10) There are many matters of vital importance to the industry that need Government approval, or departmental action, or legislation. The recent reduction in duty (from 2d to 1d per lb) on imported honey is a case in point. Australia is now in a very favourable position to dump honey in New Zealand if a big crop is harvested in that country. Because of the lack of any political organisation of beekeepers, we simply had to take this "smack in the face" and give a twisted grin. In most cases, our representations to the Government on matters of urgency to the industry are merely shelved, and results are practically negligible. We are entitled to the same concessions as are given to other industries (in proportion, of course), but we fail to get them because we lack political weight. By making ourselves felt as voters we can secure results. The "National" wants all beekeepers to specially help in this work.

(11) I am writing this letter in an endeavour to enlist the active support of all beekeepers, whether in or out of the "National," whether one-hive or 100-hive men. The will to help is the only qualification necessary. The fight is on for life and strength for the beekeepers' own "National" organisation. This circular-letter is the first shot in the fight, and it has been fired (without any cost to the "National") from one end of New Zealand to the other.

(12) Would you write me a brief letter frankly criticising this letter, and stating whether you will be willing to act with us in getting honey propaganda into your local paper, also the name of the paper; and if you will be willing to write to your Parliamentary representative when it is necessary, and giving the name of your member and the name of your electoral district? I have a map of New Zealand divided into electoral districts, and the names of

all local newspapers written on each electoral district, with the name of the Parliamentary representative.

(13) If you are anxious for any special information as to how to handle your *honey* so as to secure the highest quality product possible in its particular grade, write me and state your difficulty and I will be pleased to send you a prompt reply (non-members as well as members). This service can be greatly extended and developed if beekeepers so desire and will help to put new life into the "National."

(14) At present the president of the "National," Mr. Wallace Nelson, of Otorohanga, is touring the Dominion placing before meetings of beekeepers the urgency of the price stabilisation of honey, and plans for its accomplishment. As the matter is most important all beekeepers are invited and urged to attend the meetings. The recent conference was so fully convinced of the need for taking urgent action that voluntary donations were taken up in the room amounting to over £20 towards the cost of the president's tour. Further subscriptions are being received and the balance required will be found by New Zealand Honey, Ltd.

(15) Everyone who reads this circular-letter must remember that in the minds of all progressive beekeepers and all student beekeepers are born ideas of vital interest to each of us. These ideas are fated to meet an untimely death under an ordinary individualistic

system; but where *meetings* of beekeepers are held, however, the ideas are forged into implements of splendid service on the anvil of constructive criticism. The final weighing of the ideas at a "National" conference assures them of being earnestly considered by the best brains in the industry. This is a most important function of the "National," and the need for a powerful, widespread organisation is self-evident.

If you are wishful of becoming a member of the "National" we will be glad to enrol you, but please remember that this is least of the objects of this present letter.

With fraternal greetings.

Your faithfully,

P. A. HILLARY.

Member of the executive of the National Beekeepers' Association of New Zealand.

298, Remuera Road,

Remuera, Auckland, S.E.2.

July 23, 1935.

Note:—The subscriptions to the National are as follows:

Up to 15 colonies .....	6/8
Up to 50 colonies .....	13/4
Up to 100 colonies .....	20/
Up to 200 colonies .....	26/8

And 6/8 for every additional 100 or portion thereof up to a maximum of £2 13/4. The above subscriptions entitle the members to the full use of the legal protection fund. One quarter of each subscription is paid into this fund.

